



Senator Feinstein Calls on DHS to Express Policy For Children and Families Affected by Immigration Enforcement Raids

-Also seeks to know steps taken to ensure children are cared for-

March 20, 2007

Washington, DC – U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) has sent a letter to Department of Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff requesting information on the Department's policy of caring for children whose parents have been detained during immigration sweeps.

Senator Feinstein said she is concerned by numerous reports of children going uncared for after their parents were detained during the recent Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids.

The following is the text of Senator Feinstein's letter to Secretary Chertoff:

March 19, 2007

**Secretary Michael Chertoff
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Nebraska Avenue Center, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20528**

Dear Secretary Chertoff:

In recent weeks, I have been contacted by constituents and nongovernmental organizations about the impact of the recent Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids on families and children. I understand that there have been several immigration raids throughout California, including in several cities in Southern California, and most recently in Watsonville, Santa Cruz, and Marin County.

Children are the most vulnerable among us. I believe that it is critical to take steps to make sure that they are well cared for when their parents are detained or removed. For that reason, I have been troubled by reports that that ICE agents are not taking sufficient steps to ensure that the children of those persons detained have adequate care. For

example, news reports detail that toddlers have been stranded at day care centers and some children have been left without appropriate adult supervision for days.

And this issue does not impact just California. In New Bedford, Massachusetts, news reports detail that one baby, who was breast-feeding, had to be hospitalized for dehydration because her mother remained in detention.

Equally disturbing are reports from a local County Board Supervisor representing Marin County, California, that, in at least one case, a 7-year-old U.S. citizen child was swept up and detained.

For that reason, I would appreciate answers to the following questions:

- Could you please provide your policy on caring for children whose parents are detained and the steps your agency takes to ensure that children are provided appropriate care during the arrest and removal process, as well as after the removal if the child is a U.S. citizen?**
- Additionally, how can family members, including children, determine the whereabouts of their parents or other individuals who are detained?**
- What is your policy on visitation or other contact with family members of a detained person?**

While exercising its immigration enforcement authority, I believe that the federal government has a special obligation to ensure that the children of the undocumented individuals are treated humanely and left with appropriate caregivers.

Thank your for your attention to this matter.

Best regards.

Sincerely yours,

**Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator**

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